

# Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Natural Resources Conservation Service Ranking Worksheet

Sponsor does NOT complete this form.  
NRCS & FRPP Technical Advisory Committee will complete ranking.

## SPONSOR'S PROGRAM RANKING FACTORS

<b>ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION</b> <i>(see Application Guidelines and the RFP for details)</i>	<b>Y / N</b>
Proposal is received <b>or postmarked</b> by due date	
Sponsor is eligible for FRPP participation	
Adequate funds are available for proposed parcels. (Applications can be accepted if approval for matching funds is still pending. Contact the FRPP Manager for details)	
<b>New Sponsor Bonus</b>	
<i>Intent: to encourage new FRPP sponsors, and develop new partnerships with NRCS. Spread funding among a variety of sponsor programs and locations in the state.</i>	
Sponsor's Program has never been approved for FRPP funding	10
<b>1) Sponsor's Program management</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on sponsor programs that demonstrate well-developed existing procedures and high capacity to acquire, manage, and enforce easements</i>	
All policies and procedures for baseline documentation, monitoring, enforcement, and title and appraisal review are described in the application and meet FRPP requirements	15
All policies and procedures are described, but some will need to be developed or modified to meet FRPP requirements.	8
Neither of the above, or insufficient information in the application	0
<b>2) Easements currently held</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on sponsors that have extensive experience in acquiring, managing, and enforcing easements, especially farmland protection easements</i>	
<b>10 or more easements</b>	
on working farms for the purpose of preserving agriculture; AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement.	20
for the purpose of preserving agriculture, natural areas, or other open space AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement. Easements for other purposes, such as public access, do not count for scoring this section.	12
for the above purposes. Not all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included.	8
<b>4 to 9 easements</b>	
on working farms for the purpose of preserving agriculture; AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement.	16
for the purpose of preserving agriculture, natural areas, or other open space AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement. Easements for other purposes, such as public access, do not count for scoring this section.	9
for the above purposes. Not all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included.	6
<b>1 to 3 easements</b>	
on working farms for the purpose of preserving agriculture; AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement.	12
for the purpose of preserving agriculture, natural areas, or other open space AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included for each easement. Easements for other purposes, such as public access, do not count for scoring this section.	6
for the above purposes. Not all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included.	4
<b>none</b>	0

<b>3) Staffing</b>		
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on programs that have strong staff support to manage, monitor, and enforce easements over the long term</i>		
One or more staff years (1800 hours) are devoted to program management, farmland protection, or easement management each year by paid employees of the sponsor, AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included.		15
One-half or more staff years (900 hours) are devoted to program management, farmland protection, or easement management each year by paid employees of the sponsor, AND all information requested in the Application Guidelines is included.		10
Volunteer staff with specific functions or duties related to easement aquisition, surveying, or legal work have been identified.		5
None of the above, or insufficient documentation in the application.		0
<b>4) Status of previous FRPP grant(s)</b>		
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on sponsor's with a proven successful FRPP track record. Avoid funding programs that have failed to meet their responsibility, under the FRPP Cooperative Agreement.</i>		
<b>All Previously granted FRPP funds have been used -</b>		
All funds from the most recent FRPP grant were used within 1 year		5
All funds from the most recent FRPP grant were used by the original deadline established in the Cooperative Agreement		0
All funds from the most recent FRPP grant were used by an extended deadline established by amendment to the Cooperative Agreement		-5
<b>Previously granted FRPP funds remain unused -</b>		
Previously granted FRPP funds remain unused. The application includes a plan and timeline for spending the funds on specific parcel(s) by the original deadline established in the Cooperative Agreement.		0
Previously granted FRPP funds remain unused. The application includes a plan and timeline for spending the funds on specific parcel(s) by an extended deadline established by amendment to the Cooperative Agreement.		-10
Previously granted FRPP funds remain unused. A plan and timeline for spending the funds on specific parcel(s) is not available, AND the original deadline established in the Cooperative Agreement is <b>more than</b> 6 months away.		-15
Previously granted FRPP funds remain unused. A plan and timeline for spending the funds on specific parcel(s) is not available, AND the original deadline established in the Cooperative Agreement is <b>less than</b> 6 months away.		-20
<b>No previous FRPP grant(s)</b>		0
<b>Subtotal: program score (65 max)</b>		
<b>PARCEL RANKING</b>		
<b>ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION</b>		<b>Y / N</b>
<i>Intent: To summarize the parcel eligibility based on the application and items 6 through 21 of the ranking sheet</i>		
A qualified written pending offer is included in the application		
The parcel includes at least 50% prime or important farmland.		
The parcel includes eligible historical or archaeological sites.		
Parcel is privately owned		
At least 50% of the parcel is in agricultural use <i>(including the farmstead)</i>		
Development is not already restricted or physically impossible		
Parcel faces development pressure		
Landowner income does not exceed the Adjusted Gross Income limits for CCC payments		
Easement meets FRPP requirements and intent		
Existing agricultural infrastructure and markets support continued agricultural use of the parcel		
Landowner is not out of compliance with USDA wetland & HEL requirements		

<b>5) Sponsor's Ranking System</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on farms that the sponsor has ranked and selected using a systematic, objective method.</i>	
Parcel was evaluated and selected using a structured, objective ranking system, similar to LESA, with numerical scores and criteria that complement FRPP objectives. A copy of the completed ranking, including the score for each specific ranking criteria, is included.	5
Does not meet the above criteria, or insufficient information in the application	0
<b>6) Local Farmland Protection Plan</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels that are within areas targeted for farmland protection by both the sponsor's plan and local governments</i>	
The easement is within an area targeted for development by a local government as indicated by a locally approved and adopted land use plan, sewer service area, urban growth boundary, cooperative boundary agreement, annexation plan, or similar development plan.	-12
The easement is very close to existing development in a rapidly growing area AND local land use controls are unlikely to prevent development around most of the farm.	-8
The easement is within an area targeted for protection from development by the Sponsor's plan AND by recent land use plan(s) <b>approved and adopted by more than one unit of local government.</b>	10
The proposed easement is within an area targeted for protection from development by the Sponsor's plan AND by a recent land use plan <b>approved and adopted by a single unit of local government.</b>	6
The proposed easement is within an area targeted for protection from development by the Sponsor's plan	0
None of the above, or insufficient information is included in the application to score this criteria	-10
<b>7) Zoning</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels that are within areas zoned as farmland protection areas</i>	
<b>Parcels in all areas -</b>	
Insufficient information is included in the application to score this criteria	-10
<b>Parcels in areas with zoning or protection zoning -</b>	
Less than 50% of the perimeter of the proposed easement is adjacent to land zoned as farmland, agriculture, parkland, or open-space <b>protection area.</b>	
urban farms (see definition below)	0
other farms	-7
At least 50% of the perimeter of the proposed easement area is adjacent to land zoned as farmland, agriculture, parkland or other open-space <b>protection area.</b>	10
At least 50% of the perimeter of the proposed easement area is adjacent to land zoned as <b>agriculture, parkland or other open-space.</b>	6
<b>Parcels in areas with no zoning -</b>	
Less than 50% of the perimeter of the proposed easement area is adjacent to land in agricultural, parkland, or other open-space use.	
urban farms (see definition below)	-6
other farms	-10
Between 50 and 75% of the perimeter of the proposed easement area is adjacent to land in agricultural, parkland, or other open-space use.	0
More than 75% of the perimeter of the proposed easement area is adjacent to land in agricultural, parkland, or other open-space use.	2
"Urban Farm" definition: A farm that benefits from being in close proximity to an urban area, and is large enough to remain economically viable even if mostly surrounded by urban development. (eg: pick-your-own farms, specialty crop farms that market directly to the public or tourists, & some community supported agriculture farms, greenhouse, nursery plant, or christmas tree operations)	

<b>8) Size of farm</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels large enough to support viable agricultural operations. Avoid funding small, isolated parcels.</i>	
The proposed easement area + immediately adjacent farmland protected by permanent easement is large ( $\geq 150$ ac for farmland requiring larger parcels to be economically viable, eg: dairy, pasture, hayland, row crops, CRP) ( $\geq 24$ ac for farmland that is economically viable on smaller parcels, eg: specialty crops)	5
Medium ( $\geq 70$ ac) ( $\geq 12$ ac)	2
Small ( $\geq 35$ ac) ( $\geq 6$ ac)	0
Very small	-10
<b>9) Proximity to other farmland parcels protected by permanent easements</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on acquisitions that help create a large protected area for agricultural production</i>	
Adjacent existing easements (must be for the purpose of keeping working farms in agricultural use).	5
Within 1 mile	3
Within 2 miles	2
More than 2 miles	0
<b>10) Value per acre</b>	
<i>Intent: protect as much farmland as possible with the funds available. Avoid parcels with extremely high development pressure.</i>	
Total easement value per acre is less than \$4000	0
Subtract 2 points for each \$1000 in total easement value per acre over \$4000 (round to the nearest \$1000)	-2 to . . .
<b>11) Appraisal</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on proposals with a well-established easement value.</i>	
An appraisal or appraisal summary, less than 1 year old, meeting UASFLA or USPAP standards, completed by a state certified appraiser AND the terms and conditions match the offered easement area and meet FRPP requirements, is included with the application.	10
An appraisal older than one year, meeting UASFLA or USPAP standards OR a current written estimate or opinion of easement value by a state certified appraiser AND the terms and conditions match the offered easement area and meet FRPP requirements, is included with the application.	6
An appraisal is included with the application, but it does NOT meet UASFLA or USPAP standards OR was NOT completed by a state certified appraiser OR terms and conditions do NOT match the offered easement area or do NOT meet FRPP requirements	0
Estimate of easement value is based on 2 or more recent farmland protection easements on nearby farms with similar land use and soils AND substantial differences in estimated value are well documented.	0
Estimate of easement value is based on easement values for other parcels in the area that are being protected for a purpose other than farmland protection.	-5
No appraisal or estimate of easement value was included with the application.	-10
<b>12) Pending offer</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on firmer pending offers, including those with an option or agreed-upon price.</i>	
A signed option or other legally binding agreement to purchase the easement at an agreed-upon price is included with the application AND terms substantially match easement terms and conditions and meet FRPP requirements.	10
The written pending offer is signed by both a Sponsors' representative and the landowner AND shows that terms and price have been substantially agreed upon AND little additional negotiation or modification is expected AND easement terms substantially meet FRPP requirements.	8
The written pending offer includes correspondence, or an application to the sponsor, signed by the landowner indicating interest in selling an easement, but issues such as terms or price remain to be negotiated or do not meet FRPP requirements.	4
A written pending offer is NOT included with the application.	0

<b>13) Easement</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on easements that meet FRPP requirements, and are already tailored to the specific parcel and landowner</i>	
A draft easement is included with the application, or a detailed description of easement terms including; limitations, size and location of farmstead area, allowable and prohibited uses, construction allowed in the easement area, easement purpose and duration, prohibition of subdivision, and any special terms; AND all terms meet FRPP requirements.	10
A draft easement, or a detailed description of easement terms is included with the application, but some terms do not meet FRPP requirements or remain to be negotiated. Easement language needs <b>minor</b> modifications to comply with FRPP requirements.	5
Included is a brief or general description of proposed easement terms. Terms generally meet FRPP requirements but language needs modified to comply with FRPP requirements.	0
A draft easement is included with the application, but terms do not meet FRPP requirements and significant negotiation with the Sponsor or landowner is needed to resolve differences. Easement language needs <b>major</b> modifications to comply with FRPP requirements.	-5
Easement terms or description were not included with the application	-10
<b>14) Partnerships</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on acquisitions with partners that can serve as backup holders of the easement. Eligible partners must meet FRPP eligibility criteria, and the easement must be within their official program area.</i>	
The easement will include a "successor interest" clause and the backup partner will sign the easement accepting the successor interest, or at least two entities will sign as equal co-holders of the proposed easement.	10
Does not meet the above, or insufficient information in the application.	0
<b>15) Soil quality</b> ((prime ac + unique ac + (important ac/2))/total ac) x 100 = pct high quality farmland	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on farms with the best agricultural soils.</i>	
score 1 point for every 5% high quality farmland over 50% (round to the nearest 5%)	0 to 10
<b>16) Conservation plan</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on farms where a history of stewardship and conservation has been actively demonstrated</i>	
Application includes a current Resource Management System level conservation plan, with a plan map AND a current signed AD-1026 for all land owned or managed by the landowner	10
Application includes a Basic conservation plan, with a plan map AND a current signed AD-1026 for all land owned or managed by the landowner	5
Application includes a conservation plan only for "Highly Erodible Land" AND a current signed AD-1026 for all land owned or managed by the landowner	0
None of the above	-5
<b>17) Land use</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels containing more land in agricultural use.</i>	
Score 1 point for every 5% currently in agricultural use over 50% (round to the nearest 10%)	0 to 10
<b>18) Agricultural viability</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on farms more likely to remain in long-term agricultural use</i>	
<b>Score one of the following 3:</b>	
The farm has a recent detailed, written farm succession plan AND the plan or a summary is included in the application AND the farmstead is included in the easement or is already protected.	5
One of the above	0
Neither of the above	-5
<b>Also score all of the following:</b>	
Easement terms allow more than 2 single family dwellings within the farmstead area. Each addl dwelling:	-8
Easement terms allow additional single family dwelling(s) outside the farmstead area	
on capability class I, II, or III soils. Each addl dwelling:	-12
on other soils, Each addl dwelling:	-8
Easement terms exclude small areas owned by the grantor, that protrude into the easement area or are adjacent to the easement area, and are reserved as potential building sites. Each potential building site:	-8

<b>19) Historical or Archaeological Resources</b>	
<i>Intent: Place a higher priority on parcels including significant historical or archaeological resources</i>	
Farm includes historical or archaeological sites <b>listed</b> in the National Register of Historic Places.	10
Farm includes historical or archaeological sites <b>formally determined eligible for listing</b> in the National Register of Historic Places by the state or tribal Historic Preservation Officer.	8
Farm includes historical or archaeological sites <b>listed</b> in the State or Tribal Register of Historic Places.	6
Farm includes other significant documented historical or archaeological resources, eg: is a Hoosier Homestead Farm and the easement includes the farmstead, or indian mounds are present on the property	4
None of the above, or insufficient information in the application	0
<b>20) Social, cultural, economic, or scenic benefits</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels with complementary social, cultural, economic, or scenic benefits</i>	
<b>Score all of the following and add scores together (maximum of 10 points)</b>	
Farm has special cultural or social value, eg: farm is a pick-your-own farm, or Community Supported Agriculture farm, or a farm that hosts public tours or harvest festivals	5
Farm has higher than average economic benefit for the area, eg: farm is an important employer of local seasonal labor, or markets processed products directly to the public	5
Farm has higher-than-average scenic value, eg: farm has scenic views that make it significantly more attractive for development than other parcels in the area; or the scenic rural character of the area is important to the local tourist economy and development would significantly degrade these qualities	5
Farm has other special social, cultural, economic, or scenic benefit	5
None of the above	0
<b>21) Environmental benefits</b>	
<i>Intent: place a higher priority on parcels with complementary environmental or conservation benefits</i>	
<b>Score all of the following and add scores together (maximum of 10 points)</b>	
Easement is adjacent to a protected natural area	5
Application includes documentation that the parcel contains rare or endangered plants or animals	5
Parcel has other special environmental benefits	5
None of the above	0
<b>Subtotal parcel score (135 max)</b>	
<b>Subtotal program score (65 max)</b>	
<b>TOTAL SCORE (200 max)</b>	